

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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Contact: Renee Hoffman
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES OCRACOKE NAMED AMERICA'S BEST BEACH
North Carolina Beats Hawaii, Florida for Dr. Beach's #1 Beach of 2007

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today announced that Ocracoke Beach on Ocracoke Island has been named the No. 1 beach on “Dr. Beach’s Annual America’s Best Beaches” list of 2007. The announcement marks the first time a beach outside Florida or Hawaii has been named to the top position on this celebrated annual top10 list.

“We are proud that Ocracoke Island has been recognized as the home of America’s best beach,” Easley said. “The unmatched beauty of our coast has for decades been a favorite of visitors to get away and relax along the quiet natural shorelines, explore the wildlife, meet unique people and hear the compelling stories of the Outer Banks.”

Stephen P. Leatherman, better known as “Dr. Beach,” directs Florida International University’s Laboratory for Coastal Research in Miami. A native of Charlotte, he has gained international attention for his annual list of *Top 10 Beaches in America*, released each year since 1991. More than 650 beaches throughout the United States are judged on 50 criteria that include factors such as sand softness, the number and size of waves, water color and condition, presence of wildlife, lifeguard protection, far-reaching views and traffic.

“Ocracoke is my favorite get-away beach,” said Leatherman. “You can find 14 miles of undeveloped beach here. The sand is golden, there are lifeguards, it’s a great place for families and there is a charming village [Ocracoke Village] at the end of the island. It’s the prefect escape for someone looking to swim or relax.”

Ocracoke Island, part of Hyde County and the Cape Hatteras National Seashore on North Carolina’s Outer Banks, is known for its clean water and unspoiled natural beauty. It sits 26 miles from the North Carolina mainland and is accessible only by boat, ferry or plane. The N.C. Department of Transportation operates ferries that carry vehicles and passengers from Swan Quarter on mainland Hyde County and Cedar Island in Carteret County. Ferry service is also available on the Outer Banks from Highway 12 in Hatteras Village to Ocracoke.

The natural, untouched beauty of Ocracoke Island’s unspoiled vistas, good waves and clean water caught the attention of Dr. Beach, but the Ocracoke Lighthouse, famous Banker pony herd and Teaches Hole, site of the pirate Blackbeard’s demise (Blackbeard’s real name is thought to be Edward Teach), have attracted tourists for years. In 2005, travel expenditures in Hyde County were more than \$27 million. For more information about North Carolina beaches, call 1-800-VISIT NC or go to www.visitnc.com/where_to_go_coast.asp.

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